**If you were accused to be a Christian, would there be enough evidence?**

20 November 2017 | Written by Heribert & Kathryn Westerveld

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**Style**: Dramatic

**Duration**:  ca. 30-40 min

**Actors**: Min 5 / Max 10 M/F + Police person

**Notes:** We dedicated a service to the theme. The service started quite normal, but after we had the introduction, confession and intercessions a policeman came in (with a lot of noise for the shock effect) and ‘arrested’(in our case) a lady from the congregation.
We had a small stage with a seat for the Judge, The Accused, and the Attorneys. The witnesses were only on stage while they were questioned. The bailiff was positioned in a prominent place in front of the stage as the stage was quite small!
The sketch was followed by an affirmation of our beliefs and concluded with another song and the grace. If you have any more questions, please contact me: hcwesterveld@hotmail.com

**Cast**:

1. Judge Lord/Lady Impartial
2. The Accused Mrs Leah Daniels
3. Bailiff Mr/Ms. Clerk (Role could be taken up by the Judge)
4. Defence Attorney:
5. Prosecuting Attorney:
6. Jury **The congregation**
7. Defence Witnesses Mr. T. Ramp and Mr. Mob Isle
8. Prosecution Witnesses Dogwalker and Mr/Mrs Loight

**Script**

Service is interrupted by the policeman/woman who is arresting the accused. The accused is led to the back of the church.

Bailiff, accused, attorneys and witnesses come to the front of the church in procession. (Drum plays)

Bailiff All rise. The Criminal Court of St. Peter In Palgrave is now in session, the Honourable Judge, Lady Impartial, presiding.

*Judge comes in*

Judge: Everyone but the jury may be seated. [If congregation starts to sit down, please bring them to order by saying something like ‘Not you lot, you’re the jury!’] Ms./Mr Clerk, please swear in the jury.

Bailiff: Please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will truly listen to this case and render a true verdict and a fair sentence as to this defendant?

Jury: “I do”

Bailiff: You may be seated.

Judge: Members of the jury, your duty today will be to determine whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty based only on facts and evidence provided in this case. The prosecution has the burden of proving the guilt of the defendant beyond reasonable doubt. This burden remains on the prosecution through the trial. The prosecution must prove that a crime was committed and that the defendant is the person who committed the crime. However, if you are not satisfied of the defendant’s guilt to that extent, then reasonable doubt exists, and the defendant must be found not guilty.

 MR/MRS CLERK, what is today’s case?

Bailiff: Your Honour, today’s case is the assumed religious beliefs of accused Mrs Daniels.

Judge: Is the prosecution ready?

Prosecuting Attorney: (*stands up*) Yes, Your Honour. (*Sits down again*)

Judge: Is the defence ready?

Defence Attorney: (*stands up*) Yes, Your Honour. (*Sits down again*).

Judge: Please bring in the Accused

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ Opening Statements ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Prosecution Attorney: Your Honour, members of the jury, my name is [make up a name of your choice] and I intend to prove that the accused Mrs Daniels is a Christian.

Defence Attorney: Your Honour, members of the jury, my name is [make up a name of your choice] and I intend to prove that the accused Mrs Daniels is not a Christian.

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WITNESS #1

Judge: Prosecution, you may call your first witness.

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour. I call to the stand Dogwalker, a respectable canine-lover.

Judge: Will the witness please stand to be sworn in by the bailiff.

(Dogwalker stands)

Bailiff: (To Dogwalker) Please raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Dogwalker: I do.

(Dogwalker goes to the stand and sits down)

Prosecuting Attorney: Dogwalker, You saw the accused last Sunday. Can you tell me the time and circumstances you saw the accused?

Dogwalker Yes, sure. As you may or may not know, I have a dog. My dog is very friendly, but a bit slow. As Sunday is normally a quiet day as all Palgravians are still in the land of nod – what else is there to do? – I walk my little friend. Now it started about 3 months ago. It must have been nearly 11 o clock and I saw her there walking suspiciously with a book in her hand. Now the first time I didn’t think too much of it, but a week later again! I thought ‘now that is odd’. And a week later again again. I thought that is again odd. Very odd. And a week later, you want to guess? Oh no I am in court, no guessing, eh? But, yes, there she went again. This time I decided to I follow her. And guess what? She went to this old building in the middle of the village. You know that one with the annoying bells, which wake me up every week. And the next week and the next week, so I made a list of all the times. I guess she is a regular… She must be a Christian!

Prosecuting Attorney: So, you see Jury, regular church attendance: the accused must be a Christian.
Thank you, Your Honour.

Judge: The Defence may cross-examine the witness.

Defence Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour.
Dear Dogwalker, so you think that if someone goes into this building he or she is a Christian?

Dogwalker Well, it’s not that I am in there very often: the last time was uncle Sam’s funeral, but I noticed it is cold in there and the seats are uncomfortable. It’s not a place you go to for your pleasure, is it?

Defence Attorney: Well, have you considered that it could be for historical interest or just because she is used to it, but it all doesn’t mean anything?

Dogwalker Well… (interrupted)

Defence Attorney: Do you know what is happening there, is the accused just sitting there, resting her eyes, meditating over the latest letter from HMRC? How do you draw the conclusion that if you go into that building it automatically means you’re a Christian?

Dogwalker Well, I think you’re a Christian if you go to church every Sunday… Isn’t that true?

Defence Attorney: We’ll leave that judgment to the Jury, shall we?
You see, going to a church is not religious. If you read what Isaiah says:

When you come before me,” God’s asking, “whoever gave you the idea of acting like this: running here and there, doing this and that - all this sheer commotion in the place provided for worship?

Quit your worship charades. I can’t stand your trivial religious games:

Monthly conferences, weekly Sabbaths, special meetings - meetings, meetings, meetings - I can’t stand one more!

I hate them! You’ve worn me out!

I’m sick of your religion, religion, religion. And do you know why?

Because you’ve been tearing people to pieces, and your hands are bloody.

Go home and wash up. Clean up your act.

Sweep your lives clean of your evildoings

so I don’t have to look at them any longer.

Say no to wrong. Learn to do good.

Work for justice. Help the down-and-out.

Stand up for the homeless.

Go to bat for the defenceless

You see, going to Church is not religious at all!
Thank you, Your Honour

Judge: You may step down.
Accused, do you want to say something?

Accused: Thank you, Your Honour. Yes, Your Honour, if I may. I don’t always go to church. Sometimes I go for a walk to clear my head. I go to the forest, see the bees, hear the birds, a deer looking for water and that reminds me that as a deer looks for water, so I want to be with God, not just in the church, but always, every day, wherever I am.
Thank you, Your Honour

Judge mmmm, wasn’t there a song about that…

Sing As a deer pants for the water

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WITNESS #2

Judge: Defence, you may call your first witness.

Defence Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour. I call to the stand Mr T. Ramp.

Mr T. Ramp is a bit hard up. Not like us, normal people sleeping in a bed. He prefers to sleep under the bridge. You know that one towards Fair Green. Denmark Bridge.

Judge: Will the witness please stand to be sworn in by the bailiff. (Witness stands)

Bailiff: (to the witness) Please raise your right hand.
Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Witness, T. Ramp: I do, Sir.

(Witness goes to the stand and sits down)

Defence Attorney: So Mister T. Ramp, Can you tell me if you have seen the Accused?

T. Ramp: Oh, yes Sir, I see her every day, Sir! She goes by on her bike, Sir, rings the bell if I can’t get away quickly enough Sir. Yes Sir, See me feet hurting, Sir, I have no shoes, Sir and me tummy Sir, soo empty Sir, like the head of that Attorney, Sir.

Prosecuting Attorneys: Objection, Your Honour!

Judge: Objection sustained.

Defence attorney Now Mr T. Ramp, there is no need to be personal here, just answer the question please with relevant information.

T. Ramp Ah sorry Sir, but me tummy is empty, Sir. No food, Sir, for days. And she comes and just walks past, Sir. Never gives me anything, Sir. And me feet, Sir, and me tummy.

Defence Attorney: So, she hasn’t given you anything at all, then?

T. Ramp No, Sir, nothing, Sir

Defence Attorney: Thank you T. Ramp.
(To the Jury) As you see, if she was a Christian, she would have given at least some food. As a good Christian she should have given her shoes and coat as Jesus said somewhere:

(Matthew 5)
If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Thank you, Your Honour.

Judge: The Prosecution may cross-examine the witness.

Prosecution Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour.
So Mr T. Ramp, can I ask you, when did you last have a meal?

T. Ramp Ah Sir, that was yesterday, Sir.

Prosecution Attorney: And where did you eat that?

T. Ramp Ah Sir, that was at the Salvation Army, Sir.

Prosecution Attorney: And who served your meal there then, if I may ask?

 T. Ramp Ah Sir, my memory, I think me head is like me tummy, a bit empty, Sir.

Prosecution Attorney: Yes, we won’t ask the Jury to have an opinion about that, but can you remember who served you?

T. Ramp Ah, Sir, yes, Sir, now I remember, she looked a bit like that person, Sir, quite a bit like that person. So much so, Sir, you almost would think it could have been the same person, Sir.

Prosecution Attorney: So, though She didn’t give you any money, She fed you at the Salvation Army, is that it?

T. Ramp Ah, yes, Sir and she gave me also some shoes, Sir, don’t you like them, Sir?

Prosecution Attorney: Yes, very nice. [dismissive]
(To the Jury) Obviously, the Accused seems to be careful about throwing money about, but seems to be a good neighbour to the hungry and the shoeless.
Thank you, Your Honour.

Judge: Mmmmm. And when I needed a neighbour… was she there?

Sing When I needed a neighbour

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WITNESS #3

Judge: Prosecution, you may call your second witness.

Prosecution Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour. I call to the stand Mr Loight.
Mr Loight is a local boy and he knows everyone in Palgrave.

Judge: Will the witness please stand to be sworn in by the bailiff. (Witness stands)

Bailiff: (to the witness) Please raise your right hand.
Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Witness: I do.

(Witness goes to the stand and sits down)

Prosecution Attorney: So, Mr Loight, can you tell us where you met the Accused?

Mr Loight: Mrs Daniels is a member of the Council and a very respected member, may I say. As Chair of the Council I can only say, if I may say so, it is a pleasure to work with Mrs Daniels.

Prosecution Attorney: Thank you, Mr Loight. Maybe you can tell us what happened at the Council meeting of July 27th?

Mr Loight According to the minutes, the full Council was there. Yes, it is always good to refer to the minutes as it is the official record and here in court we are official, aren’t we? Well, that evening, one of my Councillors, Mr B Right, had a discussion with Mrs No Better. Mr B Right started to shout and Mrs No Better followed suit. Now I must say that the content of this ‘discussion’ wasn’t minuted as we must be able to read the minutes before the watershed. Very important indeed. Now, if it wasn’t for Mrs DANIELS, and if there had been any sharp objects in the room, I am sure blood would have been shed. But here the respected Mrs Daniels came in real handy as she was a real peacemaker. She calmed everyone down, so much so, Sir, that we all went out for a beer at the Cock Inn.

 Prosecution Attorney: (To the Jury) Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”
You see: a real peacemaker, she must be a Christian!
 Thank you, Your Honour.

Judge: The Defence may cross-examine the witness.

Defence Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour.
 So, Mr Loight, as you said the minutes are very important, is that right?

Mr Loight Yes, Sir. If it isn’t in the minutes, it hasn’t been discussed.

Defence Attorney: Thank you, Mr Loight. And, did I note correctly that the discussion between B Right and No Better wasn’t recorded?

Mr Loight Yes, Sir. It was horrible. Normally our minutes have a U rating, you know - all ages admitted. But if we would have included their discussion, Sir, parental guidance wouldn’t be enough, certainly an 80 Rating. No one, I repeat, no one under the age of 80.

Defence attorney It’s eight-**teen.**

Mr Loight Yes, I said eighty.

*Judge clears his throat..*

Defence Attorney: Thank you. So, as it isn’t in the minutes, we can all agree that this never happened.
 Thank you, Your Honour.

Judge: You may step down.
Accused, do you want to say something?

The Accused: Well, Your Honour, I have always tried to be a channel of peace.

Judge: mmmmm, there’s a song about that too…

Sing: Make me a channel of your peace

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WITNESS #4

Judge: Defence, you may call your second witness.

Defence Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour. I call to the stand Mr Mob Isle
Mr Mob Isle is a communications specialist and knows about… communication.

Judge: Will the witness please stand to be sworn in by the bailiff. (Witness stands)

Bailiff: (to the witness) Please raise your right hand.
Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Witness: I do.

(Witness goes to the stand and sits down)

Defence Attorney: Thank you Mr Mob, can you….

Mr Mob Isle Mob Isle, Mr Mob Isle

Defence Attorney: Sorry, Mr Mob Isle. Can you tell us how you met the Accused?

Mr Mob Isle Certainly I can. As theft is raging in the area and the Church is empty most of the time (who wants to be there?) as a TELEcommunication Expert, I have installed mobile cameras, to secure our famous, historic heritage. Now I noted that the undercover video surveillance captured this person, Mrs Accused, you called her?

Defence Attorney: No, it’s MRS DANIELS, but she is the Accused here. So you have seen the Accused in the church on regular occasions, is that right? And what was she doing?

Mr Mob Isle Ah, I can’t say that. Privacy, you know. We can’t disclose anything that someone is doing without a court order in triplicate. Data protection, you know. … But I can tell you what she didn’t do as that isn’t protected, you know. She didn’t pray!

Defence Attorney What, did you say? Never pray? Are you sure, Mr Mob?

Mr Mob Isle Mob Isle. It’s Mr Mob Isle. But yes, I am sure. I watched what she did for hours. All kind of things like… Oh no, I can’t tell. But prayer? Certainly not.

Defence Attorney (To the Jury) Well, well, you can’t be a Christian without prayer, can you?

 Thank you, Your Honour.

Judge: The Prosecution may cross-examine the witness.

Prosecution Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour.
So Mr Mob Isle – you don’t mind me calling you Mr Mob, how do you know that the accused wasn’t praying?

Mr Mob Isle Well she was not kneeling, I didn’t hear anything, no chanting, no Amen, no folded hands, so no praying!

Prosecution Attorney: Thank you, Mr Mob – you surely, really don’t mind me calling you Mr Mob, do you? Am I right that you are a telecom expert?

Mr Mob Isle (Irritated) yes, a TELECOMMUNICATION expert

Prosecution Attorney: thank you for that clarification and if I am right you are quite… mobile, Mr Mob?

*Mr Mob Isle grunts*

Prosecution Attorney: Now, let’s imagine that we take mobile communication. Like a mobile phone. Let’s imagine that prayer is like a phone. Can you follow me, Mr Mob?

Mr Mob Isle Yes, I can follow you. I am THE telecommunication expert!

Prosecution Attorney: Good, good. No reason to shout. I am quite near you… So, if prayer is like a telephone, would you need to kneel? Would you need to put your hands together like this? Chanting?

Mr Mob Isle Eh, no… maybe not… perhaps not… quite likely not…

Prosecution Attorney: So, well, Mr Mob, the fact that you didn’t SEE the Accused pray, does that mean she definitely and beyond any reasonable doubt didn’t pray? And, because you didn’t hear the Accused pray, does that mean anything more than that something in the telecommunication was wrong?

*Mr Mob Isle grunts*

Prosecution Attorney: Thank you, Your Honour.

Judge: Mmmm Prayer is like a telephone… That is an idea…

Sing Prayer is like a telephone

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ Closing Arguments ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Judge: Both the prosecution and the defence have now rested their cases. Members of the jury, you have heard all of the testimony concerning this case. It is now up to you to determine the facts. You and you alone, are the judges of the facts.

 The Accused can behave as she wants, but what makes her a real Christian… ?

 Is it what we see on the outside? Being a good person, going to church every Sunday and putting some money in the collection?

Or is it also about what happens, when no one else is around, like the sort of TV programmes you watch and what you say about other people when they’re not there?

Is it only what happens on the outside, how we dress, what we say, how we act? Or does it come from the inside, from a living relationship with God?

And while you deliberate that, also check the facts for yourself.

Bailiff: All Rise.

(All stand, and the Judge processes up the aisle followed by the attorneys, accused, witnesses and the

procession is closed by the Bailiff. Drum plays)